

From: Peter Ratcliff [mailto:pratlif@mcn.org]
Sent: Saturday, February 02, 2008 4:28 PM
To: MLPAComments
Subject: MLPA initiative, siting & science

Dear, MLPA Staff, Stakeholders, BRTF, SAT, DFG, FGC and Resources Dept.,

I believe that MPAs can serve as a useful tool for marine ecosystem and fisheries management (1.) if they are implemented as follows.

I believe that four basic questions should be the basis for determining the boundaries and fishing restrictions in a Marine Protected Area vs. arbitrary assignment. These are:

1. Is there a specific conservation problem, and are traditional management measures unsuited and unable to provide the needed protection for this problem?
2. What is the specific geographic area where significant problems exist and where a reserve would be most effective at providing needed conservation for an adversely impacted species or habitat?
3. What specific activities, fishing or non-fishing, are causing adverse impacts to the species or habitat in this area?
4. What specific activities, fishing or non-fishing, are not causing adverse impacts to the species or habitat in the area?

Providing answers to these questions, using the best scientific information available, will facilitate the development of fair and effective reserves. In addition, any MPA regulations should:

- include specific measurable criteria upon which the conservation benefit and the effectiveness of the reserve can be judged and evaluated. This may be enhanced by establishing a select few, discrete in size no-take reserves in areas where they can be managed and studied as a benchmark for the rest of the ecosystem.
- be subjected to periodic review and to a restoration timetable, including the possible sunset of any regulations that could be lifted if targeted goals are reached.

In conclusion, the only fair MPA is where problem activities are restricted and benign activities are allowed vs. closing it to all user groups in the sake of "fairness". I encourage that you err on the side of caution as you consider not only environmental, but also, the cultural, historical and economic impacts of the current plan.

Thank you for your consideration,

Pete Ratcliff, Manager

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(1.) Ref: National Coalition for Marine Conservation